State of California
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

M e m o r a n d u m

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

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Action Item

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Ref: **SUMMARY – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, STATE ROUTE 101 IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY – CONSTRUCT OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SANTA BARBARA**

ISSUE:

The California Transportation Commission is being asked to review and comment at the December 2002 meeting on the following Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR):

Santa Barbara U.S. Highway 101 Operational Improvement Project: KP 17.4/20.6 (PM 10.8/12.8)

Construct operational improvements on U.S. 101 between the Milpas Interchange and the Hot Springs/Cabrillo Interchange.

PROGRAMMING:

The project is programmed in the 1998 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the 2000 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The project is fully funded in the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), entirely with grandfathered Regional Improvement Program (GFRIP) funds. The total cost of the project is $34,357,000 with construction scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2004/2005.

ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:

In addition to the No-Build Alternative, there are three build alternatives. The build alternatives share several features in common: they would construct new southbound lanes, new southbound off-ramp and Undercrossing; replace a bridge; improve intersections; and provide a pedestrian/bicycle facility. The features listed below for each build alternative are the features that are unique to that alternative:

- No-Build.
- Alternative B. Northbound - construct acceleration lane. Southbound - close on-ramp.
- Alternative C. Northbound - construct auxiliary lane. Southbound – widen one off-ramp, close another off-ramp, construct acceleration lane.
- Alternative D. Northbound – close one off-ramp, extend another off-ramp, construct auxiliary lanes. Southbound - .relocate on-ramp and off-ramp, replace undercrossing, close another off-ramp.

POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

- No potentially significant environmental effects identified. Under CEQA, all impacts are less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:

- Incorporate design features and construction techniques to manage soil conditions.
- Employ best available construction techniques to reduce air quality impacts.
- Construct noise barriers.
- Implement Erosion Control Plan and incorporate water quality improvements to drainage systems.
- Replace removed wetlands.
- Conduct relocations consistent with federal and state relocation laws.
- Replant removed vegetation, plant new landscaping and implement aesthetic treatment to proposed structures.
- Contain and sample any groundwater encountered before discharge. Sample excavated soils to determine proper disposal.
- Provide website to inform the traveling public about project status, detours, and other project-related information.

Attachments:

1) Executive Summary
2) Map

Executive Summary

The California Department of Transportation (the Department) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to make operational improvements to State Route (SR) 101. The proposed action includes an additional lane on the southbound side of Route 101, interchange modifications, ramp modifications, a new undercrossing at Cacique Street, pedestrian improvements, bridge replacement at Sycamore Creek and intersection improvements. The proposed action will take place on Route 101 between the Milpas Interchange and the Hot Springs/Cabrillo Interchange; the project area is two miles in length, located in Santa Barbara County, through the City of Santa Barbara, California.

This document is a combined Environmental Assessment prepared under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Environmental Impact Report is prepared under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Alternatives

An important note on naming alternatives: During the scoping of this project, the alternatives were originally numbered 1 through 6. For clarity, Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 were named A, B and C, and Alternative 6 was renamed D. Alternatives 4 and 5 were rejected and appear in Section 2.1, "Alternatives Withdrawn from Consideration." Depending on when the technical reports were prepared, some reports and attachments may refer to the original alternative numbers.

Alternative A: "No Build" Alternative

This alternative proposes to do nothing to Route 101 in the project limits. The "No-Build" Alternative is used as a baseline for comparison of current conditions vs. conditions associated with the "Build" alternatives.

Alternatives B, C and D: "Build" Alternatives

In addition to the unique *Northbound* and *Southbound* improvements listed for each Alternative, the "Build" Alternatives B through D all share the following features:

- Construct a third southbound lane from Milpas Street to the Cabrillo/Hot Springs Interchange, add a southbound lane over Milpas Street, and construct a new southbound loop off-ramp at Milpas Street.

- Construct the Cacique Street Undercrossing to connect Cacique Street between Milpas Street and Alisos Street.
- Replace the Sycamore Creek Bridge at Route 101.
- Improve the intersections of Cabrillo Boulevard with Hot Springs Road, Coast Village Road, Old Coast Highway, and the northbound and southbound ramps, and provide a pedestrian/bicycle facility through the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange.

Alternative B

Unique to Alternative B are the following project components:

Northbound – Construct an acceleration lane at the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange northbound on-ramp, ending prior to the Salinas Street off-ramp.

Southbound – Close the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange on-ramp. The Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange inside off-ramp and Los Patos off-ramp will remain open.

Alternative C

Unique to Alternative C are the following project components:

Northbound – Construct an auxiliary lane from the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange on-ramp to the Salinas Street off-ramp.

Southbound – Widen the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange inside off-ramp to two lanes, close the Los Patos off-ramp, and construct an acceleration lane at the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange southbound on-ramp.

Alternative D

Unique to Alternative D are the following project components:

Northbound – Close the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange northbound off-ramp and extend the Hermosillo northbound off-ramp. Construct an auxiliary lane from the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange on-ramp to the Salinas Street off-ramp, and an auxiliary lane from the Salinas Street on-ramp to the Milpas Street off-ramp.

Southbound – Relocate the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange off-ramp and on-ramp to the outside of Route 101, replace the southbound 101/Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange Undercrossing, close the Los Patos off-ramp.

Table S.1 summarizes the potential environmental impacts and proposed mitigation for each alternative. The separation of impacts into southbound and northbound would allow decision-makers to choose the final alternative based on the separate portions of each alternative

Table S.1 Summary of Impacts for Each Alternative

Impact Category		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Geology & Seismic	***Northbound & Southbound***	No Impact	Impacts are identified in connection with seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction. These impacts would be considered less than significant under CEQA. Depending on the type of structures used and what is found during evaluation, various design features and construction techniques would be used. For a detailed list of design features refer to *Section 3.4 Geology and Seismic Activity.*	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Air Quality	***Northbound & Southbound***	No short-term construction impacts to air quality. No long-term improvements to regional air quality	Temporary construction impacts to air quality. Best available construction techniques would reduce construction impacts to less than significant under CEQA. Slight enhancement of long-term air quality	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Noise	***Northbound***	Unimproved noise levels at six locations range from 57 to 74 dBA (design year 2025)	Existing and predicted noise levels currently exceed FHWA and City of Santa Barbara noise thresholds. The new construction would not increase noise levels to a significant level. Noise barriers are proposed to reduce the existing noise levels and predicted noise levels. Barriers are proposed at three locations.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
	Southbound	Same as Northbound	Existing and predicted noise levels currently exceed FHWA and City thresholds. The new construction would not increase noise levels to a significant level. Noise barriers are proposed to reduce the existing noise levels and predicted noise levels. Barriers are proposed at one location.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Water Quality	***Northbound & Southbound***	No increase in runoff. No improvement to water flows that enter the Andree Clark Bird Refuge.	Less than significant impact under CEQA. An Erosion Control Plan would be implemented. Culverts would be designed to detain sediment and prevent scouring, erosion, and sedimentation. Long term water quality improvements would be incorporated to drainage systems entering the Andree Clark Bird Refuge.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B

Impact Category		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Wetlands & Waters of the U.S.	*Northbound*	No encroachments of jurisdictional waters, wetlands or riparian areas	No impact to jurisdictional waters, wetlands or riparian areas.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
	Southbound	Same as Northbound	Temporary impacts to 139.3 m^2 (1500 f^2) of waters of the U.S. and 12.1 m^2 (130 f^2) to wetlands. Permanent impacts to 49.2 m^2 (530 f^2) of wetlands. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated under CEQA. Removal of wetlands will be replaced within the project limits. Wetlands will be placed in the highway right-of-way.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Floodplain	*Northbound & Southbound*	No change, floodplain drainage would remain the same.	No encroachment to the floodplain. Improve design of existing soundwall. Removal of concrete median barrier and replacement with metal beam barrier.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Wildlife, Fisheries & Vegetation	*Northbound & Southbound*	No disturbances of vegetated areas	No impacts to wildlife or fisheries. Vegetation proposed for removal would be replanted.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Species of Concern	*Northbound & Southbound*	No impact	The proposed bridge replacement would have a less than significant impact with mitigation under CEQA to Southern Steelhead and Tide Water Goby.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Coastal Zone	*Northbound & Southbound*	No impact	No impact to the Coastal Zone, however, prior to construction, coastal development permit required	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Cultural Resources	*Northbound & Southbound*	No impact	No impacts to cultural resources. There are no cultural, historical or paleontological resources within the project limits.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B

Impact Category		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Land Use & Planning	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Relocation	***Northbound***	No impact	Less than significant impact under CEQA. There is relocation of 2 multi-family residences, and 1 mobile home with this alternative. All relocations would be consistent with federal and state relocation laws.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
	Southbound	No impact	Less than significant impact under CEQA. The numbers of residences relocated would not necessitate the need for new construction of replacement housing. This alternative would relocate 2 single-family residences and 1 business. All relocations would be consistent with federal and state relocation law.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Joint Develop-ment	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impacts. No improvements to long-term pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or to connection of Milpas commercial district and lower east-side residential area and the waterfront.	No impact. There would be improvements made to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Improvements would be made to the connection of the Milpas commercial district and lower eastside residential area and the waterfront.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impacts to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. No improvement of long-term pedestrian and bicycle facilities	Temporary construction impacts to pedestrian/ bicycle facilities. Enhancement of long-term pedestrian and bicycle facilities	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B

Impact Category		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Visual	***Impacts common to all Build Alternatives***	1. The construction of the third southbound lane and a southbound loop off-ramp south of the interchange would result in the loss of screen vegetation. The addition of a solid bridge rail will increase the urban appearance for highway travelers. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation under CEQA. New landscaping is proposed and will provide some mitigation of the urbanized character, however replanting opportunities will be limited and will not fully replace the screening benefits of the existing planting. Exterior bridge rail treatments will be fully visible from the local streets but not visible from the highway. 2. The Cacique undercrossing would cause an adverse impact for residents on the north side of the highway due to an increase in scale and change in neighborhood character. The impacts however will be reduced to an insignificant level under CEQA, with the implementation of aesthetic treatment to the proposed structures and substantial planting in the vicinity of the structures. Additional landscaping in the areas along Cacique Street north of the highway and south of Alisos Street would further reduce visual impacts. 3. Replacement of the Sycamore Creek Bridge would result in impacts associated with the additional highway pavement and the change in bridge rail character. These visible changes are less than significant under CEQA. 4. The removal of the existing median planting along Route 101 will reduce the vegetated character of this segment of the corridor. The impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated under CEQA. Short-term impacts are expected until the new planting matures. 5. The reconfiguration of the Hot Springs/Coast Village road interchange and the pedestrian tunnel under the railroad would result in a beneficial impact by unifying the view and new aesthetic treatments. Other common features to all three alternatives would result in visual impacts. Those impacts, however, would be less than significant under CEQA, as proposed replanting matures and blends the highway roadsides with the surrounding landscape			
	Northbound	No impact	The acceleration lane from the Cabrillo Blvd. on-ramp would have an initial short-term impact; impacts would be less than significant under CEQA with replacement planting.	Construction of the northbound auxiliary lane from the Cabrillo Blvd. on-ramp to Salinas Street northbound off-ramp would have a short-term impact. Impacts would be less than significant under CEQA, with replacement planting.	Extension of the Hermosillo Drive off-ramp and the auxiliary lanes from Cabrillo to Salinas and from Salinas to Milpas would have a short-term impact. The impacts would be less than significant under CEQA, with replacement planting. The closing and landscaping of the Cabrillo Blvd. off-ramps would have beneficial impacts by providing additional space for planting
	Southbound	No impact	A beneficial impact would result by closing and landscaping the Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Blvd. interchange southbound on-ramp	Widening of the Cabrillo Blvd. off-ramp and construction of an acceleration lane for the Cabrillo Blvd. on-ramp would have short-term impacts. Replanting will reduce these impacts to a less than significant impact under CEQA. Closing and landscaping the Los Patos off-ramp would have beneficial impact.	Short-term impacts would occur due to the relocation of the Cabrillo Blvd. on- and off-ramps and reconstruction of the Cabrillo Street undercrossing. Replanting will reduce these impacts to a less than significant impact under CEQA. Beneficial impacts would result from closing and landscaping the Los Patos off-ramp

Impact Category		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Hazardous Waste	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated under CEQA. Groundwater encountered during construction would be contained and sampled before discharge. Excavated soils would be sampled for total lead. Soils with a total lead of 350 mg/kg or more would be properly disposed	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Construc-tion	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impact	Construction and traffic impacts would be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Construction would last four years. The best available control technology is required. Construction equipment would conform to the Department noise specifications. A project website will be available to give local residents, travelers and businesses updates to the project status, detours, informational phone numbers and other project related information.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
Growth Induce-ment	***Northbound & Southbound***	No impact	This alternative would not induce population growth or commercial development beyond planned levels. No impact to growth inducement.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B

Areas of Controversy

Issues of concern raised by the public and government agencies focus on the potential for the build alternatives to impact the visual quality of the corridor. Other issues include highway capacity, noise and construction impacts.

Permits

Following selection of a preferred alternative and prior to construction the following permits and consultation will need to be obtained:

- Coastal Development Permit, City of Santa Barbara
- Coastal Development Permit, California Coastal Commission
- Section 404 Nationwide Permit, Army Corps of Engineers
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification Waiver, Regional Water Quality Board
- Section 1601 Streambed Alteration Permit, Department of Fish & Game
- Consultation and coordination with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) in accordance with Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Decision Making Process

Following circulation of the EA/Draft EIR, the Department will respond to comments made to the EA/Draft EIR during the public comment period and the public hearing. Preparation of the EA/EIR will occur at this time as well. The Lead Agency (the Department) would select a preferred alternative based on comments from the public, City of Santa Barbara, SBCAG and other agencies.

Final consultation on endangered species (tidewater goby) and steelhead critical habitat would occur with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries concurrently with preparation of the EA/EIR. The results of that consultation would be included in the EA/EIR. Following selection of the preferred alternative and response to comment the EA/EIR would be finalized.

Once the environmental document is finalized the preferred alternative design would be refined. As design progresses the Department would begin the permit process with the following agencies:

- City of Santa Barbara (Coastal Development Permit),
- Coastal Commission (Coastal Development Permit),
- Army Corps of Engineers (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Nationwide Permit),
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, Water Quality Certification),
- Department of Fish and Game (Streambed Alteration Permit 1601)

These process could take up to 18 months to complete. During this phase the Department would seek concurrence from the Coastal Commission and City of Santa Barbara on final aesthetic treatment to the project design. Final wetland ratios and mitigation would be identified for impacts to Sycamore Creek and the wetland area near the four culverts based.

Consultation & Coordination

Once the environmental document is finalized the preferred alternative design would be refined. As design progresses the Department would begin the consultation and coordination process with the following agencies:

- United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for Tidewater Gobies.
- National Marine Fisheries (NMFS), consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for Steelhead.
- At this time consultation and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is complete. In the event of discovery during construction, consultation and coordination with SHPO will begin. Based on the project area, there is a low likelihood of encountering buried prehistoric deposits.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Santa Barbara County Flood Control District
- Santa Barbara County
- Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Santa Barbara County Fire Department Protection Services Division

- Central Coast Information Center, Department of Archaeology
- California Highway Patrol
- California Coastal Commission
- California Department of Fish & Game
- Regional Water Quality Control District
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

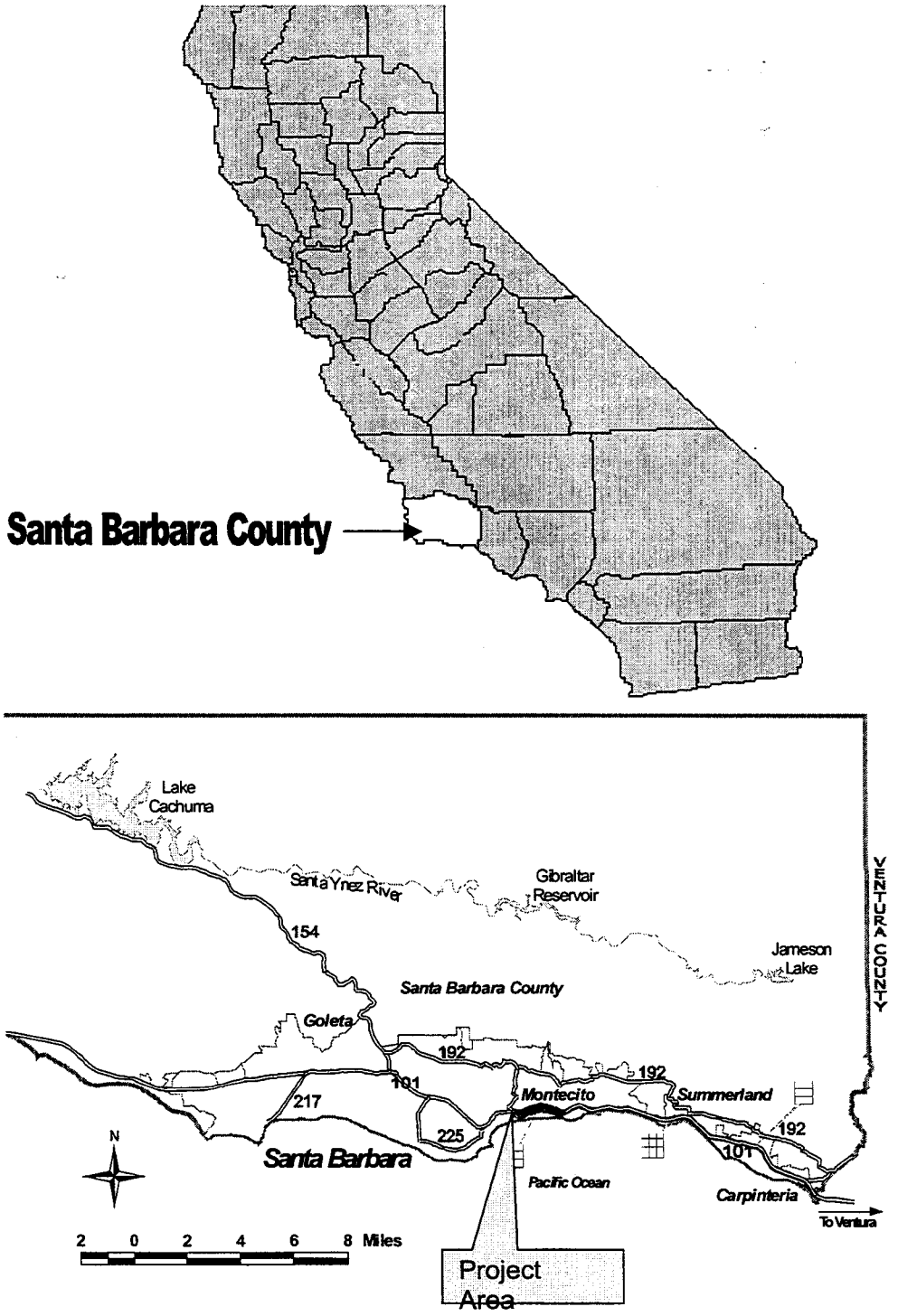

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map